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EXAMINER				
AMPAGOOMIAN, DAVID S				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
2446				
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/559,665

Applicant(s)

KANBARA ET AL.

Examiner

DAVID AMPAGOOMIAN

Art Unit

2446

Period for Reply -- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 December 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1.5-14 and 16-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1.5-14 and 16-19 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SI/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

This action is in response to the amendment filed 12/22/2008.

Claims 1, 5-14, 16-19 are pending

Claims 1, 8, 11-13, 19 are amended.

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments filed 12/22/2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.
2. The applicant argues regarding amended claim 1 that the applied reference Can does not disclose an IC chip sending part for sending identification information of the office supply to the image forming apparatus, the examiner respectfully disagrees. Can disclose the use of a RFID integrated circuit chip for sending identification information to track inventory by replacing/augmenting the use of barcodes or other "optically-read technologies" (Can: [0005-0007]). While Tami discloses an image forming apparatus with a barcode reader for tracking/managing inventor information (Tami: [0054-0058]). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to replace/augment the use of optical barcode reading of Tami with the use of RFID IC chip tags of Can in order to track/manage inventory without line of sight or contact with the inventory (Can: [0005-0007]).
3. The applicant argues regarding amended claim 13 that the applied reference Tami does not disclose "that the office supply information server sends a supply replenishment prompt signal for prompting a user of the image forming apparatus to

replenish the office supply to the image forming apparatus when the remaining number is smaller than a predetermined number for the office supply”, the examiner respectfully disagrees. Tami discloses a hand held image forming apparatus that interfaces with an inventory management system that provides quantity of items in stock information to the image forming apparatus (Tami: [0054-0058]). Tami also discloses the image forming apparatus providing computer assisted ordering information for replenishing the stock of items and the use of automated generation of order to replenishes stock (Tami:[0077-0079]).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.
5. **Claims 13-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Tami et al. (US 2004/0059634) hereafter Tami.**

Regarding claim 13, Tami disclose an office supply information server that is connected to at least one image forming apparatus having a touch panel via a network, the office supply information server comprising:

a server information sending part for sending information to the image forming apparatus (“The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display

current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058]; and

a client information receiving part for receiving information input from the touch panel of the image forming apparatus ("touch-screen terminals" Tami: [0074], [0087-0088], "The high speed server receives and stores input data from the POS system and updates the relational databases of the primary in-store on a real time basis as store items are being "rung up" at the point of sale. The primary POS server 86 is also in communication with the inventory management system stored on the ISP 14. Accordingly, the inventory management system is updated virtually at the same time and rate as the relational data bases on the primary POS server 86" Tami: [0062], "inventory management system which is integrated with the relational databases of the primary point of sale server." Tami: [0026]), wherein,

the office supply information server receives a number of remaining office supplies in the image forming apparatus (Tami: [0077], "The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory ", "Moreover, the handheld units 58 can be programmed to query the ISP 14 to provide computer assisted ordering information for the stock item read" [0054-0058]), and

the office supply information server sends a supply replenishment prompt signal for prompting a user of the image forming apparatus to replenish the office supply to the image forming apparatus when the remaining number is smaller than a predetermined number for the office supply ("In the preferred embodiment, the method of the present

invention allows for automatic stock replenishment based on POS scan data with re - order points configurable in the inventory file." Tami: [0077], "For example, a database of in-store-inventory can be analyzed for generating computer assisted re-stocking orders" Tami: [0061]).

Regarding claim 14, Tami discloses the office supply information server as claimed in claim 13 as described above.

Tami further discloses the office supply information server further comprising:
a user information storing part for storing order history of each user("In addition to demographics/transaction history capture" Tami: [0489-0493] [0061]);

a preference information storing part for storing preference information of each user ("Referring still to FIG. 4, the express savings program 172 provides the ability to offer rewards (e.g. coupons, gift certificates, etc.) and multiple pricing structures to individual customers based on purchase levels and shopping habits, and may be implemented using multiple devices including POS terminals 124, kiosks and the internet." Tami: [0496]);

an advertisement generation part for generating an advertisement to be sent to each user on the basis of the order history and the preference information (Tami: [0496]); and

an advertisement sending part for sending the advertisement to the image forming apparatus (Tami: [0496]).

Regarding claim 16, Tami discloses the office supply information server as claimed in claim 13 as described above. Tami further discloses, wherein the office supply information server receives data of a remaining amount of an office supply in the image forming apparatus (Tami: [0077], [0054-0058],[0013]), and

the office supply information server sends a warning relating to the remaining amount to the image forming apparatus when the received remaining amount is smaller than a predetermined amount ("When the out of stock items are replenished, the system would need to alert store personnel" [0574], "The integrated inventory management system 114 of the present invention tracks item movement at the item level by time (hh:mm) day, week and event, forecasts re -order requirements and issues stock level alerts." Tami: [0082]).

Regarding claim 17, Tami discloses the office supply information server as claimed in claim 13 as described above. Tami further discloses, the office supply information server further comprising:

a search part for receiving information of a barcode from the image forming apparatus ("The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058]), and searching for an office supply corresponding to the barcode by using the information of the barcode ("The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to

provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058],

wherein the office supply information server sends information of the office supply to the image forming apparatus if the office supply is found from the information of the barcode, and the office supply information server registers the information of the office supply in an expansion commodity storage as a commodity to be newly dealt in if the office supply is not found from the information of the barcode ("The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058]), and the office supply information server registers the information of the office supply in an expansion commodity storage as a commodity to be newly dealt in if the office supply is not found from the information of the barcode (Tami: [0054-0058],[0081-0085]).

Regarding claim 18, Tami discloses the office supply information server as claimed in claim 13 as described above. Tami further discloses, wherein the office supply information server refers to an amount of money stored in the user information storing part wherein the amount of money is a limit amount usable by a user for ordering office supplies (Tami: [0098-0120], [0006], [0052]), and

if an amount of money necessary for purchasing office supplies ordered from the image forming apparatus by the user is smaller than the limit amount of money, the

image forming apparatus performs an approval process (Tami: [0098-0120] , [0006], [0052], [0077-0084]).

Regarding claim 19, Tami discloses the office supply information server as claimed in claim 13 as described above. Tami further discloses, the office supply information server further comprising:

a stock management part for managing stock of office supplies, wherein the stock management part performs stock management on the basis of information of an office supply relating to the supply order prompt message ("fully automated generation of orders to replenish merchandise, based on POS scan data" Tami: [0013], [0082]), information of an office supply relating to the warning, or the information of the barcode ("When the out of stock items are replenished, the system would need to alert store personnel" [0574], "The integrated inventory management system 114 of the present invention tracks item movement at the item level by time (hh:mm) day, week and event, forecasts re -order requirements and issues stock level alerts." Tami: [0082], "The handheld units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058]).

6. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

7. Claims 1, 5-9, 11-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tami et al. (US 2004/0059634) in view of Can et al. (US 20020038267 A1) hereafter Can.

Regarding claim 1, an image forming apparatus using system including at least one image forming apparatus having a touch panel and an office supply information server that is connected to the image forming apparatuses via a network, the image forming apparatus comprising:

a user identifying part for identifying a user when the user uses the image forming apparatus (Tami: [0098-0121], [0300]);

an operating system that provides a graphical user interface by which the user operates the image forming apparatus on the touch panel (Tami: [0074], [0088] and "operating system is industry standard" [0278]);

a client information sending part for sending replenishment information to the office supply information server ("The high speed server receives and stores input data from the POS system and updates the relational databases of the primary in-store on a real time basis as store items are being "rung up" at the point of sale. The primary POS server 86 is also in communication with the inventory management system stored on the ISP 14. Accordingly, the inventory management system is updated virtually at the same time and rate as the relational data bases on the primary POS server 86" Tami:

[0062], "inventory management system which is integrated with the relational databases of the primary point of sale server." Tami: [0026]); and

a server information receiving part for receiving information from the office supply information server ("The primary POS server 86 is also in communication with the inventory management system stored on the ISP 14" Tami: [0062]),

the office supply information server comprising:
a server information sending part for sending information to the image forming apparatus ("The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058]); and

a client information receiving part for receiving information input from the touch panel of the image forming apparatus ("touch-screen terminals" Tami: [0074]),

a part for sending the number of the remaining office supplies to the office supply information server (Tami: [0077], [0054-0058]),

wherein the office supply information server sends a supply replenishment prompt signal for prompting the user to replenish the office supply to the image forming apparatus when the remaining number is smaller than a predetermined number for the office supply ("In the preferred embodiment, the method of the present invention allows for automatic stock replenishment based on POS scan data with re-order points configurable in the inventory file." Tami: [0077], "For example, a database of in-store-inventory can be analyzed for generating computer assisted re-stocking orders" Tami:

[0061]), and the image forming apparatus displays information based on the supply replenishment prompt signal on the touch panel (Tami: [0054-0058]), and orders the office supply from the office supply information server by using the client information sending part based on information input from the touch panel ("fully automated generation of orders to replenish merchandise, based on POS scan data" [0013]).

Tami does not explicitly disclose wherein each office supply includes an IC chip by which the office supply can be identified, and the IC chip includes an identification information sending part for sending identification information of the office supply to the image forming apparatus by radio,
the image forming apparatus further comprising:

a counting part for counting the number of remaining office supplies based on the identification information sent from each IC chip.

Can teaches an inventory management system that makes use of radio frequency ID tags/integrated circuits (RFID's) track supplies (Can: [0010-0015]) in order to real-time "perpetual inventory counts" (Can: [0088]).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to create the inventory management system of Tami to include integrated circuit radio frequency tags as taught by Can in order to real-time "perpetual inventory counts" (Can: [0088]).

Regarding claim 5, the modified Tami reference discloses the image forming apparatus using system as claimed in claim 1. Tami further discloses, the office supply information server further comprising:

a user information storing part for storing order history of each user ("In addition to demographics/transaction history capture" Tami: [0489-0493] [0061]); a preference information storing part for storing preference information of each user ("Referring still to FIG. 4, the express savings program 172 provides the ability to offer rewards (e.g. coupons, gift certificates, etc.) and multiple pricing structures to individual customers based on purchase levels and shopping habits, and may be implemented using multiple devices including POS terminals 124, kiosks and the internet." Tami: [0496]);

an advertisement generation part for generating an advertisement to be sent to each user on the basis of the order history and the preference information (Tami: [0496]); and

an advertisement sending part for sending the advertisement to the image forming apparatus (Tami: [0496]).

Regarding claim 6, the modified Tami reference discloses the image forming apparatus using system as claimed in claim 1 as described above. Tami the image forming apparatus further comprising:

a supply remaining amount sending part for sending, to the office supply information server, data of a remaining amount of the supply in the image forming apparatus (Tami: [0077], [0054-0058]),

wherein the office supply information server sends a warning relating to the remaining amount to the image forming apparatus when the received remaining amount is smaller than a predetermined amount ("In the preferred embodiment, the method of the present invention allows for automatic stock replenishment based on POS scan data with re-order points configurable in the inventory file." Tami: [0077], "For example, a database of in-store-inventory can be analyzed for generating computer assisted re-stocking orders" Tami: [0061]).

Regarding claim 7, the modified Tami reference disclose the image forming apparatus using system as claimed in claim 1 as described above. Tami further discloses, the image forming apparatus further comprising;

a scanning part for scanning a barcode of the supply (Tami: [0054-0058]); and
a barcode sending part for sending information of the barcode to the office supply information server ("The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058]), the office supply information server further comprising:

a search part for searching for an office supply corresponding to the barcode by using the information of the barcode ("The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-

store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058],

wherein the office supply information server sends information of the office supply to the image forming apparatus if the office supply is found from the information of the barcode, and the office supply information server registers the information of the office supply in an expansion commodity storage as a commodity to be newly dealt in if the office supply is not found from the information of the barcode ("The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058]).

Regarding claim 8, the modified Tami reference discloses the image forming apparatus using system as claimed in claim 1 as described above. Tami further discloses, wherein the image forming apparatus displays an order screen for ordering office supplies in addition to displaying a supply order prompt message ("In the preferred embodiment, the method of the present invention allows for automatic stock replenishment based on POS scan data with re-order points configurable in the inventory file." Tami: [0077], "For example, a database of in-store-inventory can be analyzed for generating computer assisted re-stocking orders" Tami: [0061]), an advertisement, a warning or the information of the supply corresponding to the barcode ([0054-0058], "When the out of stock items are replenished, the system would need to

alert store personnel" [0574], "The integrated inventory management system 114 of the present invention tracks item movement at the item level by time (hh:mm) day, week and event, forecasts re -order requirements and issues stock level alerts." Tami: [0082]), and

the image forming apparatus sends information input from the order screen to the office supply information sever so that the office supplies are ordered ("In the preferred embodiment, the method of the present invention allows for automatic stock replenishment based on POS scan data with re -order points configurable in the inventory file." Tami: [0077], "For example, a database of in-store-inventory can be analyzed for generating computer assisted re-stocking orders" Tami: [0061], "When the out of stock items are replenished, the system would need to alert store personnel" [0574], "The integrated inventory management system 114 of the present invention tracks item movement at the item level by time (hh:mm) day, week and event, forecasts re -order requirements and issues stock level alerts." Tami: [0082]).

Regarding claim 9, the modified Tami reference discloses the image forming apparatus using system as claimed in claim 8 as described above. Tami further discloses wherein the order screen is displayed on the image forming apparatus as a screen different from a screen showing the supply order prompt message (Tami: [0082]), the advertisement, the warning or the information of the supply corresponding to the barcode ("The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and

display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads."

Tami: [0054-0058], "In the preferred embodiment, the method of the present invention allows for automatic stock replenishment based on POS scan data with re -order points configurable in the inventory file." Tami: [0077], "For example, a database of in-store-inventory can be analyzed for generating computer assisted re-stocking orders" Tami: [0061], "When the out of stock items are replenished, the system would need to alert store personnel" [0574], "The integrated inventory management system 114 of the present invention tracks item movement at the item level by time (hh:mm) day, week and event, forecasts re -order requirements and issues stock level alerts." Tami: [0082]).

Regarding claim 11, the modified Tami reference discloses the image forming apparatus using system as claimed in claim 1 as described above. Tami further discloses wherein the office supply information server refers to an amount of money stored in the user information storing part wherein the amount of money is a limit amount usable by the user for ordering office supplies (Tami: [0013], [0026], [0062]), and

if an amount of money necessary for purchasing the office supplies ordered from the image forming apparatus by the user is smaller than the limit amount of money, the image forming apparatus performs an approval process (Tami: [0013], [0026], [0062]).

Regarding claim 12, the modified Tami reference discloses the image forming apparatus using system as claimed in claim 1 as described above. Tami further discloses including a first image forming apparatus placed in a user's site, a second image forming apparatus placed in a municipality, and an office supply information server that is connected to the first and second image forming apparatuses, wherein: the first image forming apparatus applies for a document by sending application information to the office supply information server;

the office supply information server sends a document reservation number to the first image forming apparatus on the basis of the application information ("The high speed server receives and stores input data from the POS system and updates the relational databases of the primary in-store on a real time basis as store items are being

"rung up" at the point of sale. The primary POS server 86 is also in communication with the inventory management system stored on the ISP 14. Accordingly, the inventory management system is updated virtually at the same time and rate as the relational data bases on the primary POS server 86" Tami: [0062] "The hand held units 58 are interfaced with an in-store Point Of Sale (POS) system and the inventory management system discussed earlier to provide and display current inventory and pricing data on each stock item bar code that it reads." Tami: [0054-0058]);

the first image forming apparatus outputs the document reservation number ("fully automated generation of orders to replenish merchandise, based on POS scan data" Tami: [0013], [0026], [0062]); and

the second image forming apparatus outputs the document on the basis of the document reservation number input by the user ("Additionally, the POS terminal may include a software or hardware switch to allow the cashier to take control of the customer display in order to assist the customer without having to leave the cashier's station." Tami: [0067]).

8. Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable Tami and Can as applied to claims 1, 4 and 8 above, and further in view of Kobayashi et al. (US 20040083260 A1) hereafter Kobayashi.

Regarding claim 10, the modified Can reference discloses the image forming apparatus using system as claimed in claim 8 as described above. Tami and Can do

not explicitly disclose wherein the image forming apparatus outputs the order information input from the order screen as a facsimile format so that the office supply is ordered by facsimile.

Kobayashi discloses the use of Fax machines (Kobayashi: [0003], [0016-0017]).

Kobayashi further provides the advantage of providing a "multifunction machine/server system capable of dealing with electronic documents at a higher efficiency and being actualized at low costs" (Kobayashi: abstract).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, having the teachings of Tami, Can and Kobayashi before them at the time the invention was made to modify the inventory management and ordering system of Tami and the radio tagging system of Can to include the use of facsimile format as taught by Kobayashi.

Conclusion

9. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DAVID AMPAGOOMIAN whose telephone number is (571)270-1896. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 9:30 AM to 7:00 PM EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jeffrey Pwu can be reached on 571-272-6798. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/D. A./
Examiner, Art Unit 2446

/Jeffrey Pwu/

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Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2446